



Charles M Saunders

October 13, 1947 - June 11, 2022

Charles M. Saunders

1947-2022

Obituary

Charles Milton John Saunders III was born at the beginning of the post-war Baby Boom generation to Myrtle and Charles Saunders, and raised in Philadelphia. The oldest of five children, Charles did not always have an easy childhood, but found outlets to develop himself. Frequently grounded for things that often reflected his sensitivity (writing down the words to a love song on the radio deemed too racy, for example), he would stay in his room and read the classics. This made him an avid reader, and he befriended a local librarian who recommended books that he absorbed, several a week.

With a sharp intellect and constantly in search of a greater truth, Charles was a lifetime seeker. In 1965, after graduating from Monsignor Bonner high school, Charles joined the U.S. Marine Corps at age 17, eager to leave Philadelphia, "become a man" and see the world. It was height of the Viet Nam war, and Charles was in a combat role as a machine gunner during the Tet Offensive. Once out of the military, he was surprised by the animosity against Viet Nam vets at that time and began searching again, starting a

commune that had a brief lifespan, traveling across the U.S. to California and other states briefly, doing carpentry for a time, and continuing his self-study. He read about other seekers and religions, such as Gurdjieff, the Upanishads, Buddhism, and the poetry in the music of the '60s and early '70s in which he found much meaning and hope. Then at age 25, he joined the Peace Corps, spending two years in Liberia in the mid-'70s, building roads to remote villages, and having further adventures as he met many unique people, such as necromancers, an eccentric animal catcher up in the deep bush who he befriended, among many others.

After Liberia, Charles returned to the states and enrolled at Portland State University in 1977 in Oregon to study Philosophy and English. It was there he met his future wife, Diane, when they were both freshmen. They quickly became soulmates and lived together throughout their four years in college. It was here that Charles found his philosophical soulmate, Baruch Spinoza, a 17th century philosopher, and began years of study of Spinoza's works, primarily *The Ethics* and *On the Improvement of the Understanding*.

Diane joined the Peace Corps in Botswana after graduating college, and Charles joined her a year later after completing his bachelor's degree. There he worked with the World Bank to develop infrastructure in under-developed areas in the country's northern capital, Francistown, where Diane was a teacher and later a Ministry of Local Government/Lands consultant. Charles next worked at the Town Council as a small business development officer, helping Botswana people with a grant/loan program to develop cottage industries. Charles and Di also got married in Botswana in 1983, an event that took 7 minutes, cost \$2 and had real staying power!

After six years in Botswana, Charles and Di returned to the states, living in Boston for 15 years where Charles worked as an employment and career counselor for a few organizations, including Lee Hecht Harrison and Jewish

Vocational Services. They enjoyed traveling throughout New England and sharing

the historic area with family and friends. Both Charles and Di earned their master's degrees while living in Boston, an MBA and MS in Communications Management, respectively.

In 2002, Charles and Di returned to Oregon where Charles continued working in the employment field and eventually put out his own shingle, using Lean management approaches to help organizations, and consulting in higher ed where he worked with universities to develop overseas connections in southern Africa.

In 2013, a cancer diagnosis changed Charles', and Diane's, world. He lost some of the things most of us take for granted, like eating by mouth, speaking on the phone, traveling with ease, and other physical abilities. But mentally, Charles became sharper than ever. His intellect pushed him to write five books on Spinoza from 2014 to 2021, while also corresponding with international scholars, and in between four major surgeries and six "smaller" ones related to his cancer recovery. Charles also wrote a number of white papers focused on philosophical issues related to his Spinoza work. Unlike most of the scholars he communicated with, Charles did not study and write about Spinoza as an academic effort. As he did his whole life, Charles was seeking answers: what is god, what is truth, what is our connection to each other and the universe, eternity, and how do our emotions affect our lives? He was halfway through his sixth and final book in his series on The Ethics when he passed away from Stage 4 cancer, after having been in remission almost nine years.

Charles is survived by his beloved wife Diane; his sisters Kim and Dianne, his

brother Paul, his sister-in-law Eleanor (wife to late brother Michael), Diane's siblings; and many nieces and nephews on both sides of the families. His parents as well as Diane's preceded him in death.

Because of COVID, only a small family service will be held on Friday, June 24 on the Oregon coast near Charles and Di's new home. In lieu of flowers, please support veterans and their families when you can. Remembrances can be sent to Di Saunders, PO Box 442, Neskowin, OR 97149.

Tribute Wall



“ *Charles M Saunders*

Charles - July 28, 2022 at 12:00 AM



“ *Charles M Saunders*

Charles - June 20, 2022 at 12:00 AM



“ *Charles M Saunders*

Charles - June 18, 2022 at 12:00 AM



“ *Charles M Saunders*

Charles - June 18, 2022 at 12:00 AM



“ *Charles M Saunders*

Charles - June 17, 2022 at 12:00 AM



“ *Charles M Saunders*

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“ *Charles M Saunders*

Charles - June 17, 2022 at 12:00 AM

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“ *Charles M Saunders*

Charles - June 16, 2022 at 12:00 AM

CH

“ *Dear Diane, we cherish our good times spent with Charles and those memories will stay with us forever. Our thoughts and prayers with you and your family, sending our deepest condolences.*

Charles - June 16, 2022 at 12:00 AM

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